

Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Great Barrington, MA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

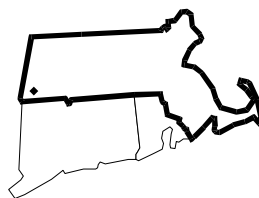
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 200 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the Town of Great Barrington for a Brownfields Pilot. Great Barrington (population 7,740) is the commercial center of southern Berkshire County, a rural area of western Massachusetts. The town's poverty rate is 7.5 percent; its unemployment rate is 4 percent; and its household income is only 91 percent of the statewide median income. Between 1993 and 1997, the Berkshire Economic Target Area, which includes Great Barrington, lost more than 2,000 jobs. The town has been designated as a state Economic Target Area, which allows it to take advantage of the state's Economic Incentive Development Program.

The Pilot targets a 9-acre downtown site on the Housatonic River that has been used for industrial purposes since the 1880s. Originally a textile mill, it was used more recently as a wood processing and treatment facility for the New England Log Homes company. Affected by the housing slump during the late 1980s, the company finally closed its facility in 1993, selling its equipment and leaving only the empty building. A 1995 assessment by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) discovered the presence of hazardous materials, including dioxins and polynuclear hydrocarbons (PAHs) in the soil. A short-term cleanup was conducted, but the DEP determined that further assessment was needed. While the building stands

PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Great Barrington,
Massachusetts*

Date of Announcement:
March 1999

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets the New England Log Homes site, a 9-acre former wood processing and treatment facility located on the Housatonic River in western Massachusetts.

Contacts:

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Barrington
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Visit the EPA Region 1 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/region01/remed/brnflld/>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

empty, unpaid property taxes, currently estimated at over \$100,000, are increasing at a rate of \$30 per day.

OBJECTIVES

Great Barrington's objective is to remove the environmental threat and return the 9-acre downtown site to productive use. New England Log Homes has agreed to sell the site to the South Berkshire Community Development Corporation (CDC) for \$1. Working with the town, the CDC has developed a comprehensive redevelopment plan that includes input from members of the community. Proposed uses include an office park, an industrial facility, and a riverside commercial-retail complex. The Pilot's plan is to assess, identify, and characterize the site's contamination, thus clearing the way to leverage cleanup of the site and identify a developer.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of the Pilot include:

- Performing Phase I and II assessments of the New England Log Homes site; and
- Developing cleanup plans for the site.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.